

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Public Washrooms

Guidance for Public Washrooms

June 15, 2020

Public washrooms are essential facilities in our communities, especially as the weather improves and public spaces begin to open. Since public washrooms can be used by anyone, precautions will be needed given the risks of COVID-19.

COVID-19 transmission can occur when people are in close proximity to one another. The virus is spread through droplets or by touching a surface infected with COVID-19. Since the virus has been found in feces, some changes in public washrooms may be necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The following mitigation guidelines can be used to reduce the risk of contracting respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

Guidelines prior to entering a public washroom

Prior to leaving for the day from one's residence, every individual must complete the self-assessment tool www.covid19checkup.ca/. If you fail the self-assessment, do not go out and call your local health unit. If while you are out you begin to feel unwell, do not enter any public washrooms and go home immediately to contact your local health unit. Please refer to the list of [COVID-19 assessment centre locations within our region](#).

Those that are seniors (over the age of 70), people with chronic disease such as diabetes, cancer, heart, renal or chronic lung disease, are at higher risk and are encouraged to stay home.

Guidelines while utilizing a public washroom

Reduce the risk of transmission:

- Stay home if you are feeling unwell

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- Respect all [Provincial Emergency Orders](#) that prohibit social gatherings of a certain size, including when within or outside a public washroom
- Practice [proper hand hygiene](#) and respiratory etiquette (cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue, immediately throw out the tissue and wash your hands)
- Post signage for [proper hand hygiene](#)
- Ensure paper towels and soap are well stocked and restocked often in washrooms
- When possible, use electronic push buttons or sensors to open doors, turn on sinks and flush toilets
- Upon entering and leaving a public washroom, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds
- Try to minimize contact with frequently touched surfaces as much as possible
- Avoid touching your face, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- If you start to experience symptoms of COVID-19, go home and [self-isolate](#) immediately, and contact your local health unit.
- For more information on COVID-19 please visit the [Southwestern Public Health website](#)

Support Physical Distancing:

- Practice [Physical Distancing](#) (2 metres) when in line and using the public washroom
- Place floor markers 2 metres (6 foot) apart in busier washrooms
- Post maximum occupancy signs to ensure physical distancing can be maintained
- Tape off sinks and/or urinals that are not able to meet the 2 metre (6 foot) distancing requirements

Cleaning and disinfecting the public washroom

- Ensure washrooms are thoroughly cleaned prior to opening for the season
- All high touched areas/surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected at least 2 times per day
 - This includes door handles, sink taps, toilet handles, stall doors/locks, etc.
- The frequency of cleaning and disinfection may need to be increases dependent on the amount of use. Please refer to the [Public Health Ontario Guidance Document on Environmental Cleaning](#) for further guidance.

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- Create a cleaning protocol to ensure that the public washroom is kept in a clean and sanitary manner and is well stocked.

Face coverings and masks

Non-medical masks are recommended when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Each individual needs to make their own decision on their level of comfort wearing a mask. If a mask inhibits the ability of someone to breathe in any way, it is not appropriate for that person. Please consider other protective measures available including physical distancing, staying home when sick, washing your hands, and practicing respiratory etiquette.

[Guidance for Universal Masking for Priority Populations \(SWPH\)](#)